

NORTHERN LIGHTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH DEVON BRANCH
OF THE DEVON BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

JULY 2012

www.northdevonbees.org



2012 so far, A Difficult Year?

We looked forward with great hopes to a good season in 2012 after the last two or three years of indifferent summers. Plans were made for comb changes, increase, queen rearing, lots of honey and a bit of experimenting with different types of hives. It hasn't been easy and we've all been indulging in that great British pastime of bemoaning the weather, with older (in beekeeping years) beekeepers saying that they cannot recall a more difficult twelve months than these last ones. We've had drought, floods, winds that have ripped the blossom off the trees prematurely, cold when it needed to be warm and scorching hot far too early to do any good.

Neither bees nor beekeeper have known what they should have been doing! Has there ever been a year when the NBU has had to put out two warnings about starving bees at times when colonies are normally flourishing?

It has been a stop/start year with only small intervals of go in between them and has precipitated a huge number of swarms. Both young and old beekeepers, whether or not they fed colonies to build them up early, have experienced a lot of swarming and repeated swarming. Swarms seem to have been leaving when a only a few Queen cells have been seen, lulling some of us into the false belief that they might be superceding! Reports of hived swarms leaving again, either immediately or a few days later, have been frequent and parent colonies have sent out repeated casts leaving colonies queenless. Queens have gone off lay leaving colonies broodless for several weeks and new Queens have been taking too long to get mated and start laying.

Disease is rife, we have EFB in our area and with bees confined to the hive by bad weather the potential for Nosema to flourish is very great. Get your bees tested at the Nosema clinic in August and attend the Disease Recognition Evening in July.

Now the blackberry is flowering, a major source of income for a lot of our bees and the colonies are not in the condition we would normally expect or hope to take full advantage of the crop.

The optimists say 'Things can only get better' We do hope so as so far this year has been a very disheartening one. Perhaps we'll have a beautiful July and lovely autumn with good flows to produce all those winter bees we need to give us the promise of a good year next year!

Julie

OUR HONEY SHOW 2012

This year our Honey Show is on 15th and 16th September at St Johns Garden Centre, Barnstaple.

We've added a few different classes for this Show.

The biggest change is the super frame competition we provide the frame for you to add your own foundation. Then simply place in a hive and sit back and wait for the bees to beautifully draw out, fill and seal the frame.

The frame judged best at the Show will receive a £5 voucher to spend at Bitz for Bees; the worst will be presented with a wooden spoon.

We also have a new beeswax class for any candle or mould, with a new trophy the Pam Yeo Jenn Plaque, kindly donated by Chris Utting.

Finally, we've introduced a heather honey class.

The Show Schedule has already been emailed to you but we will send out hard copies and attach the file again.

Please enter as many classes as you can, remember its your entries that make our Show.

Good Luck to all exhibitors.



Jeff Orr - Show Secretary

Microscopy Study Group

We are hoping to have a small group meeting at Horestone (evenings) to follow the BBKA Microscopy Correspondence course (no pressure to take exams!) This will be a 'self help' group but Graham Kingham has kindly agreed to be co-ordinator/ leader.

So, if you would like to be part of this group, have a look at the syllabus on the BBKA website and e mail Graham, (not me) hestia.kingham@waitrose.com Graham will be in touch to organise a brief planning meeting when he returns after the 18th July.

Julie

NORTH DEVON BRANCH NOSEMA CLINIC
SATURDAY 11th AUGUST 10.00am TO 2.00pm
AT THE CASTLE CENTRE, CASTLE STREET, BARNSTAPLE

Bring along a sample of at least 30 dead bees from your colonies.

They will be examined free of charge by the branch microscopists for Nosema.

A donation will be appreciated.

The invitation is open to all DBKA members.

Sampling instructions will be found with the application form in this Newsletter.

If needed, you will be able to purchase a suitable treatment.

Note: Fumidil B is no longer available

Light refreshments will be available during the day.

Further information from Julie Elkin 01598 710 986 or Chris Utting 01237 474 500

Why bother with Nosema ?

The Nosema apis problem - a few facts

1. Infected bees show no outward signs of the disease.
2. Infected bees live only half as long as healthy bees in colonies in Spring and Summer
3. Infected bees do not fully develop their hypopharyngeal glands that normally produce food for larvae
4. 15% of eggs in badly infected colonies fail to mature
5. Infected bees cease rearing brood
6. Infected queens cease egg laying and die within a few weeks - but this is rare
7. Death of colonies or serious damage is rare
8. Infected colonies have a reduced honey yield
9. A colony infected in the Autumn may fail to survive the Winter or early Spring

Nosema is one of the causes of -Spring Dwindle where the colony fails to build up and finally dies.

(sources: 'Honey Bee Pathology' by Bailey & Ball / 'The Honey Bee Inside & About' by Davis)

So far the 2012 beekeeping season has been a disaster with so much rain and low temperatures. Our bees have been confined to the hive in conditions that will encourage the spread of infectious disease such as Nosema.

Chris Utting – Branch Microscopist

Disease Recognition Evening with Adam Vevers and Team

If you are not worried about European Foul Brood (EFB), then you should be. It is coming closer and we need to be vigilant. Early detection may just save you from having your hives burnt. We have seen very active swarm movements this season, and swarms often bring diseases. From personal experience it is often Nosema that comes along with the swarm, but we now have an increasing risk of EFB.

The dilemma is that none of us want to see the signs of EFB in our hives, but we need to be able to recognise it. This is a unique opportunity to see the disease effects at first hand. We have a responsibility both to the bees and to other beekeepers to keep up our guard.

The lecture starts at 7 pm at the Castle Centre in Barnstaple, on Wednesday 11th July. Please confirm your attendance by email to me so that I can assess the numbers, without having to involve other bee associations.

The importance of this lecture cannot be overstated in the present climate. Unless you have recently completed your Basic Assessment where a lot of emphasis is given to disease recognition, you may not remember the key indicators of EFB.

A charge of £2 will be made as a contribution to apiary funds, with refreshments provided.

Martin Pollock - Branch Secretary Tel: 01237 420713 email tola7@talktalk.net

North Devon Branch of Devon Beekeepers Association

Registered Charity Number 270675

Nosema Clinic – Saturday 11th August 2012

Name..... Telephone.....

Address.....

..... Post code.....

Email

Apiary Names / Locations

SAMPLE 1 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 2 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 3 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 4 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 5 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 6 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 7 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 8 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 9 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

SAMPLE 10 Beekeepers reference.....RESULT: NIL /LOW /MEDIUM / HIGH

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SAMPLING:

1. Thirty (30) mature bees will be needed for the test. Choose a day and time when the bees are flying actively.
2. Close the entrance for a while until returning bees are crowding the entrance. Use a polythene bag and brush 30+ bees into it. Seal the bag and label with hive reference and place in a freezer immediately.
3. Remove the bees only a few hours before the test to minimize decomposition.
4. Bees and details can be sent with a fellow member on the day (on a separate form).
5. Please complete the details requested on this form clearly. Continue on a new sheet if required.
6. Please deliver the samples between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm to

THE CASTLE CENTRE, CASTLE STREET, BARNSTAPLE ON SATURDAY 11TH AUGUST 2012

You will be notified of the results either by ‘phone or email

DIARY DATES

Sunday 1st July - Beekeeping Taster Day at Horestone

Disease Recognition Evening The lecture starts at 7 pm at the Castle Centre in Barnstaple, on **Wednesday 11th July** - contact Martin Pollock if you would like to attend.

Wednesday 1st August - North Devon Show, at Umberleigh Barton Farm, Umberleigh.

Saturday 11th August - North Devon Branch Nosema Clinic.

Our Branch Honey Show - 15th & 16th September at St Johns Garden Centre, Barnstaple.

NORTH DEVON SHOW.

We will once again be present at the North Devon Show on Wednesday 1st August, with our colourful Branch display of beekeeping information and products to sell. Lets hope the weather will be kind to us.

Do you have any honey, candles etc that you would like us to sell at the shows. We will do this for you for a small commission of 10%. Contact Jeff Orr.

jefforr@aol.com

Honey spiced duck with creamy pasta

(by James Tanner from Ready Steady Cook) Serves 1

1 duck breast, trimmed

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 oz cherries, pitted

2 tbsp honey

Splash of red wine

Half tsp mixed spice

For the pasta

3 tbsp white wine

4 tbsp double cream

1 tbsp wholegrain mustard

4oz pasta, cooked

Preparation

For the duck, heat a non-stick frying pan. Season the duck and place in the pan, skin side down and fry for 5-6 minutes, draining off the excess fat.

Add the cherries to the pan with the honey, red wine and mixed spice. Turn over the duck and cook for a further 5 - 6 minutes.

For the pasta, reduce the wine, cream and mustard in a pan for a few minutes, to thicken. Stir in the pasta and warm through.

To serve, transfer the pasta to a serving plate. Remove the duck from the heat and allow to rest. Slice on an angle and serve on top of the pasta.

Commonly used pesticide turns honey bees into 'picky eaters' - published May 24 2012 in Mathematics & Economics (Science News.)

Biologists at UC San Diego have discovered that a small dose of a commonly used crop pesticide turns honey bees into "picky eaters" and affects their ability to recruit their nestmates to otherwise good sources of food. The results of their experiments, detailed in this week's issue of the *Journal of Experimental Biology*, have implications for what pesticides should be applied to bee-pollinated crops and shed light on one of the main culprits suspected to be behind the recent declines in honey bee colonies.

Since 2006, beekeepers in North America and Europe have lost about one-third of their managed bee colonies each year due to "colony collapse disorder." While the exact cause is unknown, researchers believe pesticides have contributed to this decline. One group of crop pesticides, called "neonicotinoids," has received particular attention from beekeepers and researchers.

The UC San Diego biologists focused their study on a specific neonicotinoid known as "imidacloprid," which has been banned for use in certain crops in some European countries and is being increasingly scrutinized in the United States.

"In 2006, it was the sixth most commonly used pesticide in California and is sold for agricultural and home garden use," said James Nieh, a professor of biology at UC San Diego who headed the research project with graduate student Daren Eiri, the first author of the study. "It is known to affect bee learning and memory."

The two biologists found in their experiments that honey bees treated with a small, single dose of imidacloprid, comparable to what they would receive in nectar, became "picky eaters."

"In other words, the bees preferred to only feed on sweeter nectar and refused nectars of lower sweetness that they would normally feed on and that would have provided important sustenance for the colony," said Eiri. "In addition, bees typically recruit their nestmates to good food with waggle dances, and we discovered that the treated bees also danced less."

Sylvia Barber, Foxpark, Waddicombe, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9RX (01398 341624)

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